THE DISNEYANA COLLECTOR

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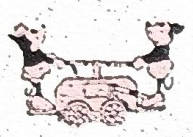
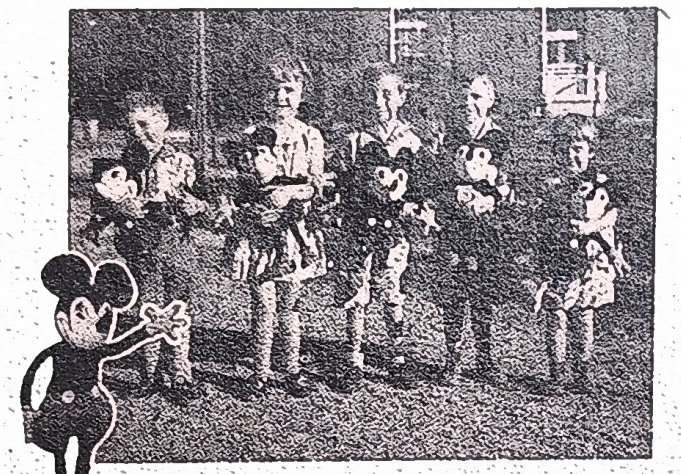
Summer 1982

DISNEY TOYS: NOT KID STUFF ANYMORE



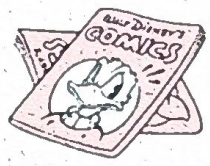
When Walt Disney began to license Mickey Mouse and his other cartoon characters for children's merchandise, he could have had no idea that items as diverse as stuffed toys and Mickey Mouse pajamas would one day be worth many times the prices for which they originally sold. The first Mickey Mouse toy, a wooden figure with jointed hands, arms and legs and a wire tail, was distributed by George Borgfeldt and Company of New York. Its original price was somewhere between five cents and five dollars (we can't be sure). That same toy, 50 years later, is probably worth between $300 and $500, depending on its condition and how much the buyer is willing to pay. A Lionel Corporation Mickey Mouse handcar that once sold for $1 can today bring as much as $500.

The prices for old Disney merchandise, of course, depend on an item's popularity. They also reflect how many examples of a given item are still available. The most elusive Disneyana objects are those which would originally have been thrown away or used up — candy wrappers, soaps, bread wrappers, bottle caps, children's hankies. Although it's not as costly, or as sought-after as that Mickey handcar, a Mickey Mouse bottle cap that originally came free with a bottle of pop, recently sold for $10 — quite an appreciation in value, even if the price itself isn't that impressive.



In the '30s, Mickey dolls were meant for children.

Comic books are another large specialty in Disneyana that would originally have been regarded as "kid stuff." Nowadays, otherwise rational adults pursue *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories*, Volume I, Number 1, with the single-minded fervor of a Scrooge McDuck chasing a new fortune. That issue cost ten cents in 1940; today its price varies from $500 to $2,800, depending on condition. Mint-condition comics are, of course, hardest to come by. Mickey and his friends, and comic books in general, were so popular that any issue was sure to pass through many grubby little hands before it was put on a shelf or (heaven forfend!) thrown in a wastebasket.



Space doesn't permit us to explore in detail the appreciation factor with respect to what was once only Disney "kid stuff," but from the few examples given above, it's easy to see that items once intended merely for the delight of children are still a source of endless pleasure — this time for adults.

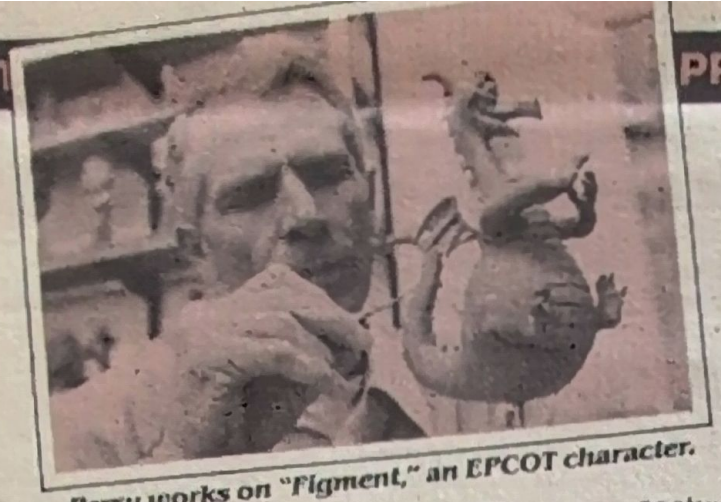
Walt would've been proud.

But even in those days, grown men couldn't keep their hands off Walt's Mickey merchandise.

Something new for Disneyana fans

People collect everything from paperweights to Picassos, and one of the brightest stars in the collectible firmament is Disneyana. The ranks of Disneyana collectors are swelling daily, so we at Disney address ourselves, through this newsletter, to some very special and faithful fans.

It is our intention to publish this newsletter on a quarterly basis. Your comments, suggestions and questions are all welcome. Send them to: Editor, THE DISNEYANA COLLECTOR, Walt Disney Productions, 500 S. Buena Vista, Burbank, CA 91521.



Perry works on "Figment," an EPCOT character.

Disney's Master Sculptor Perry Russ practices a new and exacting art: making apples and asparagus look alive

For the past three years, Disney Senior Sculptor Perry Russ has specialized in kitchen exotica, sculpting a cast of wacky talking fruits and vegetables for the Kitchen Kabaret show in the Land Pavilion at Walt Disney World's EPCOT Center, opening October, 1982.

Perry used his GI Bill to acquire a traditional art school education in design and illustration, but, he laughs in a soft Florida drawl, "I got into sculpting when I worked for a Halloween mask company."

In 1972, after a stint as a portrait sculptor and five years with a novelty company, Perry went to work for Walt Disney World. There he designed and executed the window displays for the Emporium souvenir shop, which involved a new theme based on the current Disney movie release every six months. Perry's first challenge was to produce scenes from the movie *Mary Poppins*.

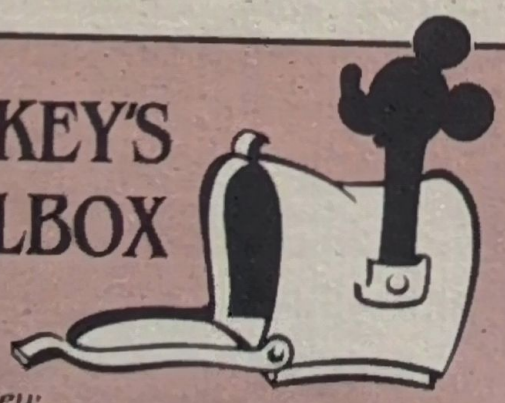
After two years as an "all-around artist," Perry's talent and artistic judgment won him the position of sculptor in Walt Disney World's Quality Control Division, where one of his tasks was to make sure the theme park's versions of the classic Disney characters were faithful to their originals—no small matter when you transpose them from the flat world of film to figures and costumes with rounded contours.

Perry has also sculpted the bisque figurine for Groller Enterprises' Christmas collectible program. The 1982 bisque, "Special Delivery," featuring Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck and Dumbo, the Flying Elephant, will be his fourth piece in the series. He has also sculpted a limited-edition Lady and the Tramp bisque, as well as the bronze Tinker Bell and Pinocchio figures awarded by Disney for 25 and 30 years of service.

Now that he's back in Florida, "I'm glad to be home—that was quite a commute!" says Perry. He lives on a five-acre ranch with his wife Priscilla and their six-year-old son, Tommy. In his spare time, when he's not repairing the tractor or mending a fence, Perry relaxes by—you guessed it—sculpting.

Here are some of the singing vegetables and fruits sculpted by Perry for Kitchen Kabaret.

MICKEY'S MAILBOX



Dear Mickey:
I am new to Disneyana collecting, and would like to ask your advice on how to start. Do I go to Disneyland and strip the Emporium counters, or should I start with one of those high-priced auctions?
E.P., Altoona, PA

Dear E.P.:
Disney memorabilia comes in almost unlimited variety, and many collectors decide to specialize in one or two areas.

One of the most enduring areas of Disneyana, as the field is known by aficionados, is that of figurines. The Disney figurines made of glazed china or bisque, date back to my early days and are still eagerly sought after today. One of the reasons many of these figurines have survived to the present day is that they were not toys, but decorative items, and so were spared the often rough use that was the lot of the toys. Since so many of these figurines have survived, it is still possible to put together a nice collection for a relatively modest outlay of funds. Only a few of the rarer pieces command the kinds of prices you've heard about in those high-priced auctions.

Of course, you may want to begin your collection with some older figurines, and although you may begin your collecting at an auction, the prices of these items should not intimidate you, for the most part. But there's an easier and even less expensive way to begin your Disneyana collection. The next time you visit Disneyland or Walt Disney World, stop by the displays of china and bisque figurines. Who knows? In 20 or 30 years, they may be as collectible as the figurines of yesteryear.

Mickey Mouse

DISNEY ORIGINAL ART PROGRAM

Every cel is one of a kind, and oh, so collectible!

A branch of Disneyana that yearly becomes more popular is the collecting of original cel paintings used in the production of animated films since 1959. That year saw the release of the last hand-inked film, *Sleeping Beauty*. It also saw the beginning of a new area of collection: original, one-of-a-kind, movie "cels." Prior to 1959, except for a few that found their way into collections, all cel paintings were destroyed once a film was completed because of the flammable material of which they were made.

In 1972 a limited release of cels to a few select art galleries was authorized by the Studio. This pilot program was so successful that the number of galleries has expanded to over 40, in separate geographical areas, and cels are available from ten classic Disney animated films: *Sleeping Beauty* (1959), *The Jungle Book* (1967), *Aristocats* (1970), *Bedknobs and Broomsticks* (1971), *Robin Hood* (1973), *The Rescuers* (1977), *Pete's Dragon* (1977), *Small One* (1978) and *The Fox and the Hound* (1981).

Disney production cels represent an affordable form of Disneyana, with an impressive potential for appreciation in value, for each is an original, and no two are exactly alike.

The Studio has also made available commemorative cel portfolios from four classic films — *Cinderella, Lady and the Tramp, Pinocchio* and *Snow White*. Each portfolio consists of four cels, hand-inked and hand-painted, identical in technique and color to the original movie cels. These portfolios were produced in strictly limited editions of 275 each.

Suzanne Hendry, coordinator of the Disney Original Art Program, welcomes inquiries, and will promptly refer you to a gallery in your vicinity that houses Disney animation cels or classic portfolios. You may write to her at Walt Disney Productions, 500 S. Buena Vista, Burbank, CA 91521.

Three cels make up this scene from ROBIN HOOD.

And here are THE RESCUERS – Miss Bianca and Bernard.

The exclusive, limited-edition SNOW WHITE cel portfolio contains four memorable scenes from that beloved classic, which premiered in December, 1937.

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GREAT NEWS!

As a service to collectors who visit the Disney parks, we have arranged to deliver The Disneyana Collector to your home. You'll be able to keep current on all of the exciting developments in the fascinating world of Disney collectibles. This cheery, informative newsletter is published four times a year ... and is available to you for the nominal charge of $1.00, to cover postage and handling. Just fill out the coupon and send it with your payment to the address below.

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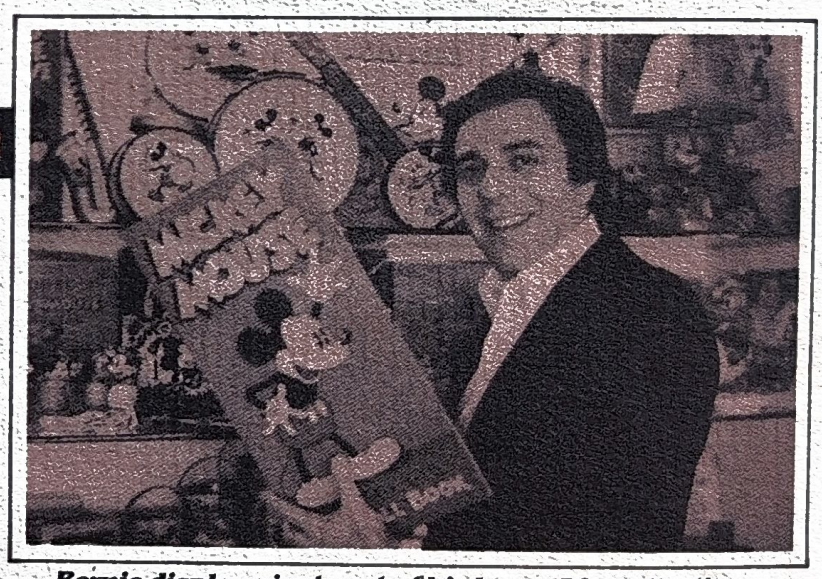
COLLECTOR PROFILE • COLLECTOR PROFILE • COLLECTOR

Bernie Shine

A thirst for the thirties



Bernie displays just part of his huge '30s collection.

Of the many reasons people give for collecting Disneyana, Los Angeles attorney Bernie Shine's is perhaps the most whimsical: "It's good luck," he says simply.

Bernie's collection of Mickey, Minnie, Donald and Pluto merchandise from the 1930s is one of the most extensive specialized collections in the country. He leans toward the three-dimensional, with a marked preference for bisque and celluloid figures. However, he also collects such diverse Disney items as watches, books, games, toys, chinaware, advertising, clothes, dolls and pinback buttons.

It's understandable that a collector who doesn't own a warehouse would limit his collection, but why the 1930s? "There's a crudeness, a certain primitiveness to the characters of the thirties that is appealing," he explains. "Mickey, Minnie and Donald from those years hadn't yet evolved into the people next door. They were still creatures of fantasy."

Bernie began amassing his collection about 12 years ago. He started with a pair of 1930s Mickey Mouse watches that he bought and later sold while he was in college. "I regretted selling them," he notes, "so when I could, I began to look around for replacements. You can see what came of that," he chuckles, waving an arm at walls lined with display cases.

Although Bernie's activities as a collector also include extensive research, contributing articles to collectors' periodicals and a certain amount of repair and restoration, he readily admits that much of the fun of collecting is in the search. "You have to be a ferret," he advises, "and follow up every lead. Once a friend of mine was traveling in France, and saw a Mickey cloth doll in a flea market. He brought back a photo of the doll and the seller's name and address. I sent off a check and a letter in French. A few weeks later, the doll arrived." And now Bernie has yet another contact in the small world of collectibles.

"I view most of the things I collect as art objects," says Bernie, "but they're approachable art. You're not afraid to handle them, or wind them up," he adds, taking a celluloid toy from a shelf and winding the key to make Mickey and Minnie swing merrily back and forth on a trapeze.

One of the delights of Bernie's collection is that it is beautifully displayed. "To me it's not gold, to hoard, or merchandise, to sell," he remarks. "Collecting is an enthusiasm to be shared. It's social, it's adventurous, and for me it offers a nice, frivolous contrast to a pretty serious profession."